

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In light of the following remarks, reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested.

I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS AND FORMAL MATTERS

Claims 1-39 are pending in this application. Claims 17-33 and 34-39 have previously been withdrawn. With this Amendment, Applicants have amended claims 1, 7, and 14, cancelled claims 15-16 and 33, and added claims 40-62. The amendments to the claims are fully supported in the application as filed and do not introduce new matter. Particularly, support for the amendments to the claims may be found at paragraphs 72-79 and 93-96 of the published application, as well in the corresponding drawings, including Figures 2A-12A, 15, and 19A-20C. Accordingly, entry of the amendments and the newly added claims is respectfully requested. Claims 1-36 stand rejected.

II. RECORD OF THE SUBSTANCE OF THE INTERVIEW

In a telephone interview with the Examiner which took place on February 7, 2006, the Applicants' representatives, Antonio Papageorgiou and Anthony Mustillo, discussed the rejections with respect to claims 1 and 14 and possible amendments to the claims to overcome the prior art of record. The Examiner indicated that the following subject matter proposed by the Applicants' representatives may overcome the art of record: a plunger type lock mechanism and a side block having a tapered wall bell-shaped curvilinear cross section. The Examiner further suggested adding a locking mechanism with a flexible finger to overcome the prior art. No decision was reached with regard to patentability.

III. THE REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner rejected claims 1-16 either under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,737,923 to Prolo ("Prolo") or under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Prolo in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,571,757 to Zolecki ("Zolecki"), U.S. Patent No. 5,657,766 to Durham ("Durham"), U.S. Patent No. 5,211,185 to Garth et al. ("Garth"), or U.S. Patent No. 3,957,262 to McReynolds ("McReynolds").

Applicants have amended herewith claim 1 to feature “one or more side blocks for securing at least one side of a body part, the one or more side blocks having ... a bell shape with an arched opening” and “wherein the one or more side blocks comprises a body part contact means removably attached thereto for contacting the body part and wherein the body part contact means has a bell shape with an arched opening.” (emphasis added). Newly added side blocks and/or body part contacting means or pads of claims 56 and 58 include similar limitations. None of the references cited by the Examiner, either alone or in combination, disclose or otherwise suggest side blocks and corresponding body part contacting means or pads constructed in this manner.

Applicant's have also amended claim 14 and added claims 48-51, 57, and 61 to include features that the Examiner indicated may overcome the prior art rejections. Particularly, claim 14 has been amended to feature “a plunger-type lock for adjustably attaching each of the one or more side blocks to the base by engaging at least one of the adjustable engagement means and the respective positional engagement means by depressing the plunger-type lock.” (emphasis added). Newly added claims 48-51 include a similar plunger-type lock. Newly added claim 57 includes the flexible finger as suggested by the Examiner and claim 61 includes the tapered-wall bell shaped cross section limitation proposed by the Applicant's representatives. None of the references cited by the Examiner disclose or otherwise suggest such features.

The dependent claims are patentable for additional reasons. While deemed unnecessary to argue these additional reasons at this time, given the arguments presented above, the Applicants reserve the right to present such arguments should it become necessary or desirable to do so.


CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that all of the claims in this application are patentable over the prior art. Accordingly, allowance of claims presented above is respectfully solicited.

Please charge any fees incurred by reason of this response and not paid herewith to Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

Respectfully submitted,
FROMMER LAWRENCE & HAUG LLP
Attorneys for Applicants

By:



Antonio Papageorgiou
Reg. No. 53,431
(212) 588-0800